



Half Moon Hill

Toni Blake

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Trying to escape her troubled past, Anna Romo has come home to Destiny determined to carve out a place for herself. When she buys the old Victorian house on the hill with the intent of furnishing it into a Bed and Breakfast, she's thrilled by the possibilities.

Ex-biker-gang member Duke Dawson is as much a fish out of water in Destiny as Anna, but he's handling it fine until an accident scars not only his body but his mind. When Anna stumbles across him in an old cabin in the woods near her newly acquired house, at first she's terrified. But they work out a deal - she's willing to keep his solitary living arrangement a secret if he's willing to help her with some of the heavy lifting at the house.

Working together on the renovations, romance brews between Duke and Anna. That is, until war hero Jeremy Sheridan returns home in a blaze of glory and sets his sights on Anna. Suddenly torn between the outgoing and charming Jeremy and the intriguing Duke, Anna's heart is torn between two paths and left with only one solution.

Half Moon Hill Details

Date : Published April 30th 2013 by Avon

ISBN : 9780062024626

Author : Toni Blake

Format : Mass Market Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Contemporary Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Half Moon Hill for online ebook

Carol Storm says

One of the best things about being an RWA member is getting the monthly newsletter and getting a complete list every year of the RITA and GOLDEN HEART winners. I picked up HALF MOON HILL because it was a Rita winner, even though I don't usually read small town romances.

I used to avoid small town romances because to me, rural settings usually lack glamour and sensuality. They also tend to be very sentimental about life and love. The amazing thing is that HALF MOON HILL totally explodes all those stereotypes.

Anna Romo is an amazing heroine, strong-willed and sexy yet deeply vulnerable. I love the way she's a tough, big city girl and she never really changes her way of presenting herself, though she does grow in kindness and understanding as the story progresses. I love how she talks about her sexy wardrobe and revealing clothes in a way that's totally honest and never defensive. I like how she makes it clear to everyone in Destiny that she is who she is and will find her own way to love and happiness.

Duke Dawson is an amazing hero as well. I really like the fact that this guy isn't a billionaire, or an English duke, or a Navy SEAL. He's just a regular guy, a biker who had an accident and wants some time to himself. I was most impressed with the way Toni Blake lets him be just who he is, and doesn't try to build him up with tons of fist fights, or adventures, or a huge stash of money buried out in the back yard.

I also was impressed by the secondary romance in this novel, which is told in diary form. The writing style of Toni Blake is very ordinary and down to earth in the Anna and Duke sections, but when she writes as the Fifties teenager Cathy her style becomes almost poetic. This part of the story really drew me in!

Toni Blake is in the very top class of romance authors writing today. She can be as sensual as Lisa Kleypas and as heart warming as Mary Balogh. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves romance in any genre, and I definitely want to read all the rest of the books in the DESTINY series!

Kady says

Very sweet! I loved Anna and Duke together. Duke was such a badass hottie biker with a sexy scar and a big heart! I loved the *Phantom of the Opera* references. I read this out of order in the series, so I was a little unclear about some of the situations, but that's my fault. I started out with the audiobook, but the inner dialogues were too long (Anna weighed the pros and cons of bringing him a glass of lemonade for like 10 pages), but when I switched to the e-book, I enjoyed it much more!

This was just one of those sweet, sexy, small town reads about an innkeeper and her wild man in the woods.

Auntee says

My favorite of the series so far...

I can't believe it...I really did not have high expectations for this one. I mean c'mon, this is Anna Romo's book--the long lost (kidnapped) sister of Mike and Lucky who came to town in the last book and almost came between Amy and Logan? Let's face it--Anna was not all that likable in that book. I *wanted* to like her, after all that happened to her, and I wanted to understand her, because I know we weren't seeing all that she was feeling. Toni Blake had her work cut out for her in this one, making the reader really *care* about Anna. And you know what? **She did it!** I adored her. I *got* her..I *rooted* for her...I cried for her. *And I wanted her to get that darn HEA!*

Anna...

And her hero--ex-biker gang member/ bad boy Duke? Could there be a more perfect, troubled hero? Oh my.....did I love him. Guilt-ridden, rejected by his family, scarred...oh did he need some lovin'. Not sex, lovin'. Anna was just perfect for him. These two "outsiders" were *perfect for each other*.

The basic plot is that Anna decides to stay in Destiny, buys an old Victorian up on the hill, and tries to renovate it with hopes of opening up a Bed and Breakfast. She meets a 'wild man' in the woods one day while picking berries--the 'wild man' is staying in an abandoned cabin on the property--and the wild man is none other than her brother's biker buddy Duke Dawson. But this isn't the Duke that Anna recalls meeting from before. This Duke is living like a recluse, battling some inner demons, some survivor's guilt and some family rejection, and just wants to be left alone. Anna and Duke eventually come to an agreement--he'll help her renovate the old Victorian if she keeps quiet about him being back in town. Anna and Duke spend a lot of time together working on the house, and of course romance follows. But is Duke ready to face his feelings for Anna?

This cobbler started it all...

Duke's little shack in the woods...

Duke, is that you behind that hair and beard?

Yep, I loved it. Once again TB perfectly captures the flavor of small-town life in Destiny. We get to visit with all the characters from the past books in the series--and not everything is hunky dory. While I enjoyed seeing all the old gang again, and reading about what they were up to, what really kept me turning the pages was Anna and Duke. Or as Duke called her, "Daisy" (for the "Daisy Dukes" she liked to wear). I just *loved* their relationship and watching it build from sex to something deeper. I loved how they opened up to each other. A lot of the time I felt myself tearing up with the stuff they revealed to each other. And when it looked like Duke was not ready to take the next step with Anna...well, my heart broke for her.

Anna drives a cherry-red, '65 Mustang...

And reluctantly has a cat, "Erik"...

I also enjoyed the little side story running concurrently with the Anna/Duke romance. Anna found a diary in the attic and throughout the story we get snippets of this story about a young girl and her first romance. Lovely story, and i loved the "Phantom of the Opera" references, but it broke my heart a bit. There's a surprise at the end of it too...(no spoilers)

Anna and Duke...together!

Anna's B&B...

If you enjoyed any of the previous stories in the series, you'll *love* this one! It's got everything. Small town atmosphere, plenty of charm, fully developed characters who are really *likable*, sensual, sexy, emotional love scenes, plenty of make-me-cry moments, and a beautiful, surprising HEA. Wow, I want to read it **again**! Don't miss it. 5 big stars!

**Thanks to Lindsey Faber and author Toni Blake for providing an ARC.*

Dabney says

This is a 3 1/2 star read for me. Definitely one of the better in the Destiny series.

this review was originally published at DearAuthor.com

Dear Ms. Blake:

I thought I was destined to escape the quaint town of Destiny, Ohio, the setting for for your contemporary romance series. I disliked the last three entries which had lost the flair of the first two, **One Reckless Summer** and **Sugar Creek**. I hadn't planned to read the most recent *Destiny* novel, **Half Moon Hill**, but a glowing review at another site made me change my mind. I'm not sorry I did. **Half Moon Hill** isn't as strong as the *Destiny* novels I like, but nor is it as bland and annoying as the three that precede it.

One reason I like **Half Moon Hill** is that there's not a lot of Destiny in it. The majority of the story takes place outside of town, in an old mansion Anna Romo is fixing up with the hope of turning it into Destiny's

first bed and breakfast. I'll acknowledge that, with the exception of Anne Calhoun's Walker Hill (the town in which her latest two books are set, the first of which, **Unforgiven**, I'll review later this month), I've had it with fictional tiny towns. Destiny, with its (sadly) unbelievably successful small town bookstore (*Under the Covers*), easily adopted felines, and wishfully accommodating populace makes me long for unpleasant hipsters in Brooklyn. I was thrilled that in **Half Moon Hill** Anna and her love interest, Duke Dawson, are living fairly Destiny-free.

Anna, portrayed as a man-stealing witch in the last book, **Willow Springs**, is trying to make a home for herself in Destiny. Anna has a tragic past. She was kidnapped at age five by a woman who claimed to be her mother and just recently found out she is really the long-lost daughter of Destiny's Romo family. Last year, Anna returned to Destiny and began to make a life for herself. The Romo brothers—both of whom have been the heroes of *Destiny* books—are very protective and Anna, in an effort to make some space for herself, bought an old Victorian on Half Moon Hill, several miles out-of-town. When this novel begins, Anna has redone the interior of the house, pretty much on her own, and is now struggling to renovate the exterior. One morning, on a trek through the nearby woods to collect berries for a possible pie-making, she runs into a man who, at first seems to her to be a step or two above Sasquatch.

Over six feet in height and bulging with muscles that gave her the impression he could tear her limb from limb, he emerged through a patch of tall shrubbery, flashing crazy, piercing blue-gray eyes. Unkempt brown hair hung to his shoulders and a scraggly beard covered the bottom half of his face, not quite obscuring the angry scar that slashed its way down one cheek.

In her hurry to escape from this barbarian, she twists her ankle badly enough that she can't walk. Since she can't immediately run away, she finds herself warily conversing with the guy and—because this is a small town—he turns out to be someone she knows. He's Duke Dawson, the biker best-friend of her brother Lucky. Several months ago, Duke was in a horrible accident and was rumored to have left Destiny and moved to Indiana. This scuttlebutt is false, however. In reality, Duke has returned and, unbeknownst to all of Destiny, is living in a run-down cabin on Anna's property. Duke is avoiding humanity. Not only does he struggle with the accident and his role in it, the crash left him scarred and sure his love life is over. Nevertheless, he tends to Anna's sprained ankle and she and he forge a relationship.

Anna needs help—that her over-protective brothers don't know about (they'd just butt in)—remodeling the exterior of her home. Duke needs a life. After a few days of watching each other bang nails in the summer heat, the two end up having hot sex and agreeing to have a no-harm, no foul relationship. Duke isn't ready to re-enter Destiny society and Anna doesn't want anyone to know she's banging a biker with a bad reputation. They tell no one of their increasingly intertwined life together and tell themselves they can walk away with ease.

Anna and Duke are a passionate pair. They have a lot of well-written sex and they understand that sex binds them. I liked that, rather than immediately use sex as a way to distance themselves from one another, both Anna and Duke give thought to whether the chemistry they share means something.

But suddenly Duke couldn't quite remember what he used to think about before Anna had come tripping her way into his little world in the woods here. What had filled his head then?

He thought back and found the answers. Mostly bad stuff. Anger. Painful memories. Helplessness. Emptiness. And he'd calmed himself by trying his damndest to focus on anything else. Birds in the trees. Fishing. The smell of honeysuckle. One day he'd even taken a honeysuckle blossom and popped the liquid inside into his mouth the way his grandmother had taught him when he was little, the sweet-tasting burst on his tongue taking him back to a time and place when he'd felt loved, and safe. But it had only been a moment. One moment in time in the midst of what otherwise was mostly dark, black, ugly.

Until Anna had come along and filled his head with something better. Even when he'd been annoyed by her, she'd been a hell of a lot more pleasant to think about than other things. But maybe he could only admit that to himself now that some time had passed.

He thought about what to do now that it was dark out. He'd mostly found it easy to go to bed early here, and to rise with the sun—but he wasn't sleepy yet.

And the truth was—he knew what he wanted to do. What he was itching to do.

The truth was—every time he'd seen her since they'd had sex on her couch and then again in her bed, it had been all he could do not to grab her and kiss her and hope it would happen again.

But he hadn't. For all the reasons he'd just thought through. She was his best friend's sister. He didn't need this kind of complication in his life, especially right now. And even if she'd seemed totally into him when they were doing it—hell, she'd even started it—he still wasn't sure what that meant, what she saw in him, or how she viewed him. And frankly, he still wasn't sure he wanted to find out. He knew he was no good for her, not in any way that went beyond sex—surely she knew it, too.

So given all those good reasons for him to just head back to the cabin and call it a day, it was beyond his understanding when his feet began to lead him through the woods toward the big Victorian house.

Their relationship develops slowly and realistically. I bought both their attraction and the ways they struggled to change their lives to accommodate each other. Over the course of the novel, both Anna and

Duke work to move past their limiting pasts and Ms. Blake does a nice job of showcasing their journeys. Their love story in **Half Moon Hill** is a nice one and I enjoyed reading about it.

There is a secondary story, revealed through an old diary, I liked as well although it mirrored, more than I would have liked, a similar “set in the past” story in Ms. Blake’s **Sugar Creek**. In **Half Moon Hill**, the story is a class-based heartbreaker, set in 1959. Anna avidly reads the diary of Cathy, the young woman whose family owned the mansion, and Robert, the hired hand who lived in what is now Duke’s cabin. Cathy’s diary, with its sad story of love denied, offers a nice counterpoint to Anna’s fears about how Destiny will judge her relationship with Duke. Ms. Blake takes a lovely risk in the way she resolves Cathy’s story and the novel is better because of it.

The novel’s weakest point is when Destiny arrives. Honestly, even the characters I once liked, irritated me here. The group of women who’ve been featured in the other *Destiny* books, all now happily paired, have new reasons to carp at each other. Unplanned pregnancy, infertility, and overly high wedding expectations have these women at odds with one another. I briefly appreciated the infertility plot until it, like all the quarrels, was simplistically resolved. There’s no escaping it: Destiny turns its inhabitants tedious. I wish them well and hope never to encounter them and their inevitable progeny again.

One other thing about the novel grated. The secondary relationship is set in 1959 when racial tensions across the country were rife. The language used to describe the social impossibility of Cathy’s and Robert’s relationship read as though more than cultural heritage separated the two. Perhaps it is my exposure to stories of that time—I majored in 20th century American history—but I felt as though the barriers to Cathy’s and Robert’s happiness were overstated.

Despite its flaws, **Half Moon Hill** is a pleasant read. Furthermore, it seems I’m not the only one ready to leave Destiny behind. On Ms. Blake’s website, she writes that her next novel, though featuring an ex-Destinyite, is set in “the sleepy Florida town of Coral Cove.” I’ll give it a try. Ms. Blake is an engaging reader and, outside the limits of Destiny, I’ve hope she’ll draw me in.

Half Moon Hill gets a B- from me.

Sincerely,

Dabney

Samantha says

When I started this book, it was hard to imagine that I would like it. Let's just say that I was not please with Anna from the last book and the thought of her getting a story was not appealing. Needless to say, I am rather surprised that I loved the story.

Anna has decided to stay in town to be around her family. She is now the owner of a small Victorian home that she wishes to turn into a B&B. While Anna makes plans for her B&B, she struggles with her own identity in the town. She doesn't feel a part of the group.

Duke Dawson is running from his past and when his plans to stay with family doesn't pan out the way he had hoped, he finds himself in a little cabin on Anna's property. He wants a little time to figure things out and she needs help to renovate the B&B. When the two of them pair up, they learn they have a lot in common.

I liked the relationship but there are a lot of miscommunication with Duke and Anna. They don't seem to talk about what they want out of the deal. The side relationship with the man who returns home does not add to the story. Instead, it makes Duke and Anna more withdrawn from their issues. I hope that the author does not throw in these fake love triangle again. It is not a theme that I enjoy in my story.

Overall, the story was sweet and readers will get a chance to see a softer side from Anna.

Amanda D. says

This review was originally posted at Smart Bitches, Trashy Books.

I'd like to preface this review acknowledging that my issues with the book are partially my own fault. Some books in a series can exist as a standalone book, while others are infused with a lot of content and characters from the previous stories. Half Moon Hill definitely belonged in the latter category.

Half Moon Hill is the sixth book in Toni Blake's Destiny series and the first one I've ever read. In my opinion, the cast of secondary characters is dizzying, especially for someone who isn't familiar with the past storylines. There's Lucky and Tessa, Amy and Logan, Jenny and Mick, Rachel and Mike, and Sue Ann and Adam. Plus our hero and heroine, Anna and Duke. I should have made some sort of flowchart or diagram to keep things straight.

That being said, I had really positive feelings at the beginning of the book. Don't let the cover fool you; it's not all butterflies and handmade swings. Anna won me over from the start with her smart mouth and snide thoughts. She wants to start a B&B, but she knows that playing Susie Homemaker doesn't come naturally to her. Recently transplanted to Destiny, Anna comes with some baggage, at least on paper. The aforementioned Lucky and Mike are her brothers, ones she recently united with. When she was around five, she was kidnapped by a woman desperate for a child. Despite this, Anna acts surprisingly well adjusted. There are also several references to the previous summers, attending her brothers' weddings and such. Something, as a first time reader, I had no knowledge of.

I did love Duke, our resident scarred and brooding hero. After a particularly rough string of events, he becomes a recluse, residing in a shack in the woods on Anna's property in order to get his head on straight.

He's the sort of hero you just want to wrap up in a big fluffy blanket and feed him. The beginning of each chapter references quotes from *The Phantom of the Opera*, which is a nice touch and you can definitely see some similarities between the Phantom and Duke. For Duke, he very much doubts Anna's attraction to him, especially on a physical level, given his facial scarring. But it's always so sweet when Duke catches those moments where he forgets about his scar because it doesn't even faze Anna; she doesn't draw attention to it.

Though at first, I loved the two main characters, I felt lost during a lot of the book. There are several instances where the story focuses on the secondary characters as a way of continuing their stories from previous books. I wasn't really invested in them, so I wound up doing a lot of skipping. There was also a bit of a pseudo-flashback trope going on. In Anna's B&B, she finds an old trunk filled with diaries and letters, cataloging the romance between the home's previous owners. I wasn't really invested in those either, considering the diaries were written by a 16-year old girl from quite some time ago. I get that they were supposed to draw parallels between Anna's budding interest in Duke and the young girl's same interest in the farmhand that lives in the woods, but I felt it was unnecessary.

As a reader of romance, I get that sex is going to happen. In fact, I totally expect it to, and the first time Anna and Duke get together, it worked for me. Her curiosity and the intense heat of the day get the best of her and she just...goes for it. But there's no foreplay in a majority of the sex scenes. None. And Anna mentions quite a few times that she hasn't been with anyone in quite some time. Props to her for being daring to go at a moment's notice, but it didn't keep me from cringing at how uncomfortable it could be in reality.

They also have a lot of unprotected sex -- even after Duke pushes her away, writing it off as just sex. Unable to control his thoughts or himself, he shows up at Anna's house again and immediately gets to business with her in the living room. Girl, he just said he was just satisfying a simple need earlier. I'm all for sexual liberation, but be smart about it! Wrap it up until you two are able to discuss the particulars of your relationship!

While they do get it on a lot, I felt that their actual interactions as people were rather infrequent. And their "falling in love" was told rather than shown. I didn't see Anna develop feelings for Duke through conversations or moments outside the bedroom. The same goes for Duke.

While the actual book wasn't bad and the writing sucked me in from page one, I couldn't get into the physical plot of *Half Moon Hill*. Part of that is on me, and readers who are more familiar with this series would probably enjoy the book and hearing about their favorite secondary characters. I would have liked more of a build up between Anna and Duke in terms of an emotional connection because I didn't quite believe it by the end. My interest in Anna peaked rather early and most of the content felt like a big inside joke that I wasn't quite a part of. So, unless you've read the previous five installments, you might have the same problems I had.

Kristiej says

I worked overtime this past weekend without realizing I'm working this upcoming weekend. So I'm now into Day 10 without a day off and 3 more to go. I did it to myself with my greed, but the end result; I don't feel like working. Add to that the fact that our manager is working off site, I don't have a whole lot to do, and I'm going to a *Cirque do Soleil* show tonight with family that I've had tickets for since before Christmas and you have a perfect storm for a non-working worker bee. Mind you I still do plan on doing my job -- just only maybe 90% instead of my usual 110% (hah, hah, hah -- no really it's usually, on average 98.3%). And

now a coworker just offered to help with what I do have.

So instead, while someone else does my job, I shall do what I do best – write a review (another hah, hah, hah. It's clear I took my morning silly pill today)

I am SUCH a fan of Toni Blake and it breaks my heart that her publisher is one of those evil corporations that charge more for an eBook than they do print books. I don't buy print books anymore except for very, very rare occasions so when Half Moon Hill came out and they wanted an exorbitant amount for the eBook, I (very) sadly moved on. I had read and loved all the previous books in the Destiny series in print before I became an ereader and inhaled them. So when Half Moon Hill came up as an Amazon Daily Deal, well I have barely taken my first morning breath when it was being uploaded into my Kindle library.

We met heroine Anna Romo, the sister of John and Lucky Romo in a previous book and to be honest, she wasn't that likeable a person. She came across as somewhat cold and uncaring and even worse, she made a play for the hero of the previous book who was destined for another.

Hero Duke Dawson, I gather, was first introduced in a previous book but to be honest I don't remember him at all. It's been a while since I read the previous books; who knows where my print copies are amongst my thousands of books and the e price is too prohibitive.

As this book opens, Anna has decided to stay in the town of Destiny. Although she was born there, she was stolen when she was young and raised by someone else so she doesn't have a lot of memories of the town or her family. As a result there are no real roots or connections. She buys an old house on the outskirts of town with intentions of turning it into a B&B. Although the inside is coming along quite nicely, it needs a lot of work on the outside and she isn't really close enough to her brothers to want to ask them for help. So outside work is coming along very slow. She is taking a bit of a break one day and comes across a very cranky, very shaggy Duke. Although neither understands it and neither want it, sparks fly between the two. Duke is in hiding in a little run down cottage on the property and doesn't want anyone knowing he's there and Anna agrees to keep his secret. She hires him to work on the outside of her home. Eventually they begin a secret affair, neither wanting anyone else knowing.

At the same time, Anna finds an old diary and gets caught up with the story of a young woman whose family owned the house years ago. The young woman's romance mirrors her own with Duke.

I love both Anna and Duke. Because we are inside of Anna's head in this story, we get to see things from her point of view. When she found out her past, her whole world was turned upside down. On the one hand she loved the woman she knew as her mother, but on the other hand the woman had done something unforgiveable. On top of that the woman has been quite unstable and Anna was forced to be more of an adult than she should have. It's not like she doesn't love her brothers, but just due to circumstances she keeps them at a distance. And not only them, but she keeps other people at bay too which is why she wasn't so likeable before. But she slowly lowers her barriers and lets other people in. I love the interplay she has with a cat that was almost thrust upon her. At the start of every chapter are quotes from Phantom of the Opera and while I normally don't pay a lot of attention to this kind of thing, in this book I quite enjoyed them and they were pertinent to the story.

And Duke, wowzers. He would be easy to not warm up to. He's a former biker and a bad one at that. He's all tatted up, scraggy, unfriendly, and uncouth with a potty mouth. But Ms. Blake writes him in such a vulnerable way that your heart breaks for him as more and more of his past is revealed. I've read other reviews where the reviewer says the same thing and it's true. He has many more layers to him than the reader thinks at first.

This is the final book in this series and it was a good one to end it with. Although I've read all the previous ones, I don't think it's necessary to have read them and this should work fine as a stand-alone. Though after reading this one, I now want to search through my thousands of books to find the other ones and reread them. Again as others have noted there seems to be a couple of threads that could be picked up for a return to

Destiny but I see her next book appears to start a new series.

I very happily and strongly recommend this book and to anyone who has it listed as to be read, I say don't wait! Pull it out and read it. You won't be sorry. When I'm still pondering a book in a good way days after I've finished reading it, you know it's a keeper.

Shawna says

3 ½ stars – Contemporary Romance

It's always great coming home again to *Destiny*, and this is a nice addition to the warm, cozy series!

Big thanks to Lindsey Faber and Ms. Blake for providing me with an ARC!

Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

Toni Blake pens such emotional and intensely moving sex scenes that they have become incomparable and they stay etched in your mind long after you've finished the book. Each scene is better than the last and it takes true talent to be able to evoke deep emotions while maintaining the steaminess.

As Blake uncovers Duke's past, my heart broke. Layer after layer is revealed about his character and the more you read, the more you fall in love with Duke Dawson. Blake does a phenomenal job of creating conflict in a contemporary setting that feels real and believable and therefore, makes for a read that will grab onto your heart and never let go.

HALF MOON HILL is a touching tale that goes beyond the usual heartbreak. It's a story that will make you want to cheer on the characters and most of all, make you believe in love.

Read this review in its entirety at Fresh Fiction

Irishgirl1247 says

Loved it! Toni Blake is moving up my favorite authors list.

I must admit I didn't love the last one and Sue Ann's was just OK, so I was a little hesitant to start this one even though I ordered it months ago. I was also feeling a little disappointed in my books lately, a bit of a slump I guess. I started to feel bad writing so many negative reviews, but finally a chance to say I really liked something! This also reminds me to accept that authors are people too, that can't spit out perfection every time and of course there is always a difference of opinion since both Amy & Sue Ann's books have pretty respectable ratings. OK enough of that, to the review!

Anna Romo, introduced previously as Mike & Lucky's long lost sister, has officially moved to Destiny and is remodeling an old house into a Bed & Breakfast. It was hard to get a feel for Anna in the last book since we mainly saw her from Tessa's perspective and she was competition. Plus her situation is pretty crazy, but I

liked that she admits that it's pretty crazy. Her mentioning that was when I started to really like it, because the unbelievable factor was holding me back a little before.

Duke Dawson, Lucky's bad biker best friend, who has been hanging around in the background for a while steps in as our male lead. A nice surprise. He is getting over a tragedy that has lead him to seek solitude in a shack/cabin in Anna's woods, without her knowledge. Once they run into each other it leads to him helping her with renovations and of course unavoidable attraction can not be ignored for long.

So both of them work through their issues with nice interludes into previous character's current happenings.

Notes:

*Makeover! You know:

[image error] vs.

Who doesn't like a makeover. Plus sexiest haircut scene ever.

*My only problem with Lucky's story was calling him Lucky the whole time, and while Duke is a better name to start with we do get to use his real name! Bonus points!

*Diary flashbacks to the previous owner of the house's first love seen through her diary.

*I also really want to make blackberry cobbler now. And the recipe is in the back of the book = more bonus points

Louise says

not in the mood to read this any more, on hold:(

Leslie says

Rating: A

Toni Blake has worked her magic again! I do think Anna and Duke might just be my favorite couple of the series followed closely by Tessa and Lucky. The pairing of Anna and Duke is a bit of an odd couple but Blake makes their romance work so very well!

Anna Romo has come home to a place she barely remembers. After having been gone from Destiny for many years, Anna is home to stay. We see how Anna is working to fit in but still holding back, not quite sure of her place in the Romo family. I liked how Anna was aware of her insecurities and her torn loyalties. There is also her need to not completely submerge herself in the small town but test the waters and ease herself into life in Destiny. It shows Anna's intelligence and maturity. I love reading about an intelligent heroine!

Duke is a hero with a bad-boy exterior and a heart of gold. At first glance, he's not someone you'd want to meet in a dark alley but once Anna, and the readers, get to know him, it's obvious he's a gentle and loving man with a little edginess that making his softer side that much more special. Duke is a realistic hero in that he doesn't try to be someone he's not but learns to like who he really is. He's certainly a favorite of mine!

With Anna and Duke living a fairly secluded life away from town, they are allowed to get to know each other with little interference from family and friends. Which is good since Mike Romo, Anna very overprotective brother, can be a real hardass. Anna and Duke don't completely forget about the people they

care about but they have those uninterrupted moments, giving them time to get to know each other beyond what everyone else sees.

Blake's humor is certainly present not only in the romance but also in the friendships featured in the story. I loved catching up with previous couples. We see that life isn't always a perfect storybook romance instead it can be messy, frustrating and ultimately filled with ups and downs. But it's how you handle both the ups and downs that show the real person.

Anna and Duke's romance tests not only what they know of each other but what they know of themselves. This last book of the series certainly ended on a high note! I look forward to heading south to Coral Cove, Florida for Ms. Blake's next series slated for a spring 2014 publication.

Bird says

I've really enjoyed the Destiny series overall, but I couldn't get into this latest installment. Anna has (thankfully) chilled out since the last book, so I thought I would like this book since I'm a big Duke fan.

My problems...

1. Too much angst. It seemed like the two main characters were just mentally rehashing the same problems over and over (and over...). There were sometimes just pages of Anna or Duke internally bemoaning their problems and thinking about how things between them wouldn't work out. I started skipping those parts once I got to the halfway point, since they weren't adding anything new to the story.
2. Nothing really happened. They fix up the house a little. Anna sees some other Destiny-ites. And...? That's it. I know that, in many romances, there isn't a strong external plot. But it just seemed like at some point SOMEONE should do SOMETHING.
3. The sex. I generally like Toni Blake's sex scenes, so I went into this book with pretty high expectations on that front. So imagine my crushing disappointment to find that the sex scenes were not only lackluster, but anger-inducing as well! First off - what's up with the lack of foreplay? I hate the wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am approach when it's basically used every single time the couple has sex.
4. Then let's talk about how Duke doesn't always pleasure Anna. There's one scene (mild spoiler, I suppose), where they do it on the stairs and he has his orgasm, and then is all like, "Sorry you didn't have one." Um, hello? You have two hands and a mouth, right? 'Cause I'm pretty sure you could use one or more of those body parts to rectify the problem. And then Anna just brushes it off with some internal thought about how it was so emotionally wonderful she doesn't even care that she didn't have an orgasm. Bullshit. I hate when a sexual encounter ends the minute a man orgasms, regardless of whether his partner did. When was the last time you read/saw/heard of a woman having an orgasm, then saying to her male partner, "Oh, you didn't? Sorry. Better luck next time." Of course not. The woman would make sure that her partner was satisfied, because as we all know, a sexual encounter ends when the man's pleased, not the woman. *eye roll* (Wow, that got a little rant-y!)

I read a magazine article (?) a while back, and it said that sex for a woman is frequently like this: You go to a nice restaurant and order a big juicy steak, but then say it's okay if the only thing that ever comes is the side salad. I don't care how frickin' good that side salad is, I want that goddamn steak! And that's what I kept

thinking with Anna and Duke during some scenes. I don't care if Anna is feeling these intense emotions while in bed with Duke. That doesn't mean she should settle for not being physically pleased as well. A good partner would tend to *all* of his partner's needs.

I'll still read Toni Blake's future books, but I'm not nearly as excited for the next one to come out after this lackluster read.

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

This sixth book in Toni Blake's *Destiny* series is a sweet, poignant, sexy story. Even though I adore this series, I was a bit apprehensive about *this* book because, to be honest, I had a bit of a problem with Anna in *Willow Springs*, and wasn't sure I'd feel much differently about her now.

Hah! Silly me! I should have known better, because this *is* Toni Blake, after all.

From the cover:

Trying to escape her troubled past, Anna Romo has come home to Destiny determined to carve out a place for herself. When she buys the old Victorian house on the hill with the intent of furnishing it into a Bed and Breakfast, she's thrilled by the possibilities.

Ex-biker-gang member Duke Dawson is as much a fish out of water in Destiny as Anna, but he's handling it fine until an accident scars not only his body but his mind. When Anna stumbles across him in an old cabin in the woods near her newly acquired house, at first she's terrified. But they work out a deal - she's willing to keep his solitary living arrangement a secret if he's willing to help her with some of the heavy lifting at the house.

Working together on the renovations, romance brews between Duke and Anna. That is, until war hero Jeremy Sheridan returns home in a blaze of glory and sets his sights on Anna. Suddenly torn between the outgoing and charming Jeremy and the intriguing Duke, Anna's heart is torn between two paths and left with only one solution.

Anna's story is sort of a two-parter, told between *Willow Springs* and *Half Moon Hill*, and as I said, I really didn't like her much in the previous book, but upon reevaluation, I guess it's *not* so surprising, after all. I mean, there wasn't a lot to get happy about with her coming between Logan and Amy at every turn, and even though Logan was somewhat clueless, Anna was not. She knew about Amy and still made a move on Logan, and that did *nothing* to endear her to me, so yeah... wasn't sure I'd be able to get behind her story, this soon, but what I learned about Anna changed that.

If you've followed the series you know that Anna is Mike and Lucky Romo's little sister, the one who went missing when she was just 5 years old, leaving her family without answers as to what had become of her. Well, she finally came home in *Willow Springs* and did everything she could to fit in, find acceptance, and come to grips with her past while facing her future. To me she seemed selfish, arrogant, ungrateful... but in truth, she was just lost, and *that's* what I learned about her, and why I was able to come to care about her.

Duke Dawson is such a fantastic hero, but everything about him makes you want to run for cover - he's gruff, crass, scarred inside and out, and looks like he's *devolving* into a caveman. His story, which comes out

in bits and pieces, is heartbreaking! I'm not sure many women would be able to love a man like Duke, but with Anna's past, with all she's been through, she's able to see the man he truly is. Over time, she finds the chink in his emotional armor and sets him free, and for that reason alone I care about her and respect her.

This is a really nice addition to the series, and I truly enjoyed spending a lot of time with the other couples. In addition to watching Anna and Mike work out their problems and become the family they should have always been, there are a couple of side stories that were tugging at my heartstrings, and I love how they all worked out.

The bottom line: Toni Blake is such an amazing storyteller! The *Destiny* books are very sexy, some bordering on erotic, but there's so much story there... so much life and love! Even with all the passion and sex, Ms. Blake's stories never fail to evoke deep, powerful emotions, and I know that once I've turned the final page, I'll be left with a smile on my face and a sigh in my heart.

My thanks to Avon Books for providing me with a copy of Half Moon Hill in exchange for an honest review.

Elaine says

There is something very warm and comforting about a Toni Blake novel

We go back to **Half Moon Hill in Destiny** to continue this time with Anna and Duke's story.

Anna is the sister of Mike and Lucky, She went missing when she was 5 years old and returned back to Destiny as a grown woman to get to know her brothers again. She never really believes she fits in or belongs in Destiny but she decides to stay to open a business there.

Out in the woods one warm May day she bumps into Duke who is hiding away from everyone in a run down hut, after the death of a dear friend.

They form a friendship at first but it doesn't take long to develop into something stronger.

In the house Anna is renovating, she finds a diary belonging to the previous owner. It tells the beautiful story of Claire and Robert.

This helps her to understand her feelings for Duke, and a reason for them both to stay in Destiny.

I love Toni Blake's male characters, they are all quite alpha but with Duke there's also a softness there.

It took me a few chapters to get started but once I was there I didn't want to leave.

We get to meet all of the past book characters to see how they are getting on, in this heart warming story.

How I would love to live in Half Moon Hill

This is the place where we may find our Destiny
